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Paper No. 5

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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Song et al. :
Application No. 09/771,876 : ON PETITION
Filed: 29 January, 2001 :
Attorney Docket No. 38,058 :

This is a decision on the petition filed 11 December, 2001, under 37 CFR 1.137(a)¹ to revive the above-identified application which is first treated as a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment.

The petition is dismissed.

The application became abandoned on 30 May, 2001, for failure to timely file an oath or declaration and a surcharge for its late filing as required by the Notice to File Missing Parts of

¹A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the required reply, unless previously filed; In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.
- (2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(1);
- (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable; and
- (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c).

Nonprovisional Application (hereinafter "Notice to File Missing Parts") mailed on 29 March, 2001, which set a two (2) month period for reply. No extensions of the time for reply in accordance with 37 CFR 1.136(a) were obtained. The filing of the present petition precedes the mailing of Notice of Abandonment.

Petitioners assert that the Notice to File Missing Parts mailed on 29 March, 2001, was never received. Petitioners further state that a status request was filed on 23 July, 2001. No response was received, petitioners state, to the status request, nor was a filing receipt ever received.

PETITION TO WITHDRAW THE HOLDING OF ABANDONMENT

Petitioners assert that the Notice to File Missing Parts mailed on 29 March, 2001, was never received. A review of the record indicates no irregularity in the mailing of the Office action, and in the absence of any irregularity in the mailing, there is a strong presumption that the Office action was properly mailed to the address of record. This presumption may be overcome by a showing that the Office action was not in fact received. The showing required to establish the failure to receive an Office action must include a statement from the practitioner stating that the Office communication was not received by the practitioner and attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records indicates that the Office communication was not received. A copy of the docket record where the non-received Office communication would have been entered had it been received and docketed must be attached to and referenced in practitioner's statement.² The showing outlined above may not be sufficient if there are circumstances that point to a conclusion that the Office action may have been lost after receipt rather than a conclusion that the Office action was lost in the mail (e.g. if the practitioner has a history of not receiving Office action).

The showing of record is insufficient to warrant withdrawal of the holding of abandonment. Petitioner has not presented a copy of the docket record where the non-received Office communication would have been entered had it been received and docketed. Additionally, petitioner has not presented a statement from the practitioner attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records indicates that the Office communication

² M.P.E.P. § 711.03(c); See Notice entitled "Withdrawing the Holding of Abandonment When Office Actions Are Not Received," 1156 O.G. 53 (November 16, 1993).

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was not received. As the required showing has not been presented, the petition must be dismissed.

PETITION UNDER 37 CFR 1.137(a)

The Commissioner may revive an abandoned application if the delay in responding to the relevant outstanding Office requirement is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to be "unavoidable".³ Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.⁴

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a).⁵ Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action,

³35 U.S.C. § 133.

⁴*In re Martullath*, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912) (quoting *Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also *Winkler v. Ladd*, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), *aff'd*, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); *Ex parte Henrich*, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." *Smith v. Mossinghoff*, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." *Haines v. Quigg*, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

⁵See MPEP 711(c)(III)(C)(2) for a discussion of the requirements for a showing of unavoidable delay.

but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, facsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.⁶

A delay resulting from the lack of knowledge or improper application of the patent statute, rules of practice or the MPEP does not constitute an "unavoidable" delay.⁷ A delay caused by an applicant's lack of knowledge or improper application of the patent statute, rules of practice or the MPEP is not rendered "unavoidable" due to (1) the applicant's reliance upon oral advice from Office employees; or (2) the Office's failure to advise the applicant of any deficiency in sufficient time to permit the applicant to take corrective action.⁸

In the present petition, petitioners have not presented a sufficient showing of unavoidable delay. The showing of record, the filing of a single letter requesting status, does not reflect diligence on the part of petitioner. While the Office attempts to timely respond to status requests, the Office has no obligation to notify parties of deficiencies in their responses in a manner permitting a timely correction.⁹

As petitioner has not provided a showing of evidence to satisfy the requirements of a grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), the petition will be dismissed.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Petitioner may wish to consider filing a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), which now provides that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A

⁶ Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

⁷ See Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 317, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1132 (N.D. Ind. 1987); Vincent v. Mossinghoff, 230 USPQ 621, 624 (D.D.C. 1985); Smith v. Diamond, 209 USPQ 1091 (D.D.C. 1981); Potter v. Dann, 201 USPQ 574 (D.D.C. 1978); Ex parte Murray, 1891 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 130, 131 (1891).

⁸ See In re Sivertz, 227 USPQ 255, 256 (Comm'r Pat. 1985); see also In re Colombo, Inc., 33 USPQ2d 1530, 1532 (Comm'r Pat. 1994) (while the Office attempts to notify applicants of deficiencies in their responses in a manner permitting a timely correction, the Office has no obligation to notify parties of deficiencies in their response in a manner permitting a timely correction).

⁹ Colombo, 39 USPQ2d 1530, 1532.

grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after 8 June, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

The filing of a petition under the unintentional standard cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore should be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Should petitioner decide to file a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), the additional petition fee due would be \$1,280.00.

A copy of the form for filing a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive an application unintentionally abandoned is enclosed herewith for petitioner's convenience.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Box DAC
Washington, D.C. 20231

Application No. 09/771,876

By FAX: (703)308-6916
Attn: Office of Petitions

By hand: Crystal Plaza Four, Suite CP4-3C23
2201 South Clark Place
Arlington, VA 22202

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the
undersigned at (703)308-6918.



Douglas I. Wood
Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions
Office of the Deputy Commissioner
for Patent Examination Policy

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